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THE WINNING ROUND



THE WINNING ROUND

NO MAN CAN SAY FOR SURE WHAT WILL BRING ABOUT THE FINAL OUTCOME OF A BATTLE. THINGS UNEXPECTED, OFTEN SMALL AND UNIMPORTANT, CAN PLAY A VITAL PART IN VICTORY OR DEFEAT.



...HERE IS THE STORY OF ONE HIGH-EXPLOSIVE 75 MM TANK SHELL. IT WAS A 'ONE-IN-A-MILLION' SHELL. A USELESS OBJECT - A DUD ROUND!

Chapter 1. *TANK TRAP*

ACROSS THE RHINE AND DEEP INTO GERMANY SWEEPED THE ADVANCING ALLIES. WITH EVERY MILE THE FIGHTING BECAME MORE SAVAGE...

LIEBERHAUSEN, SIR. LOOKS AS IF JERRY'S PULLED OUT ALREADY!

I'M NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES, CAPTAIN. SEND UP A RECCE TANK.

A SHERMAN TANK DETACHED ITSELF FROM THE COLUMN AND GROUND ITS WAY UP THE WOODED SLOPE...

ALL CLEAR, SIR. LOOKS LIKE THIS IS A CAKE WALK—FOR A CHANGE!



THEN THE COMMANDER'S VOICE ROSE TO A STARTLED SHOUT...

WAIT A MINUTE!
WE'VE FLUSHED OUT
A HALF-TRACK GUNNER.
H.E. ROUND - QUICK!



INSIDE THE GUN TURRET, THE TANK GUNNER JABBED AT THE FIRING BUTTON...

FIRE!
FIRE! WHAT'S
THE MATTER
WITH YOU?

IT MUST BE
A DUD ROUND!
EJECT!
EJECT!



SAVED BY THE FAULTY SHELL,
THE GERMAN HALF-TRACK SPED
INTO NEW COVER, ITS SPANDAU
CLAMMERING...

DASH IT -
THEY'VE GOT
AWAY!

SAVE YOUR
AMMUNITION,
DUMMKOPF. WE
SHALL NEED
EVERY ROUND
LATER!



LET'S GET OUT OF
HERE BEFORE JERRY
USES SOMETHING BIGGER
THAN A MACHINE GUN!



BUT THAT WILD GERMAN SPANDAU BURST HAD CLAIMED A VICTIM, UNSEEN BY THE SHERMAN'S CREW.



BADLY WOUNDED BY THE GERMAN BULLETS THAT WERE NOT EVEN INTENDED FOR HIM, THE OFFICER FAINTED...



AND FROM HIS SATCHEL SLIPPED A DESPATCH THAT BORE THE NAME OF A MAN ALREADY FAMED IN TANK WARFARE.

AT THAT SAME MOMENT, COLONEL HALSTEAD WAS ACTING ON THE REPORT OF HIS RECCO TANK...

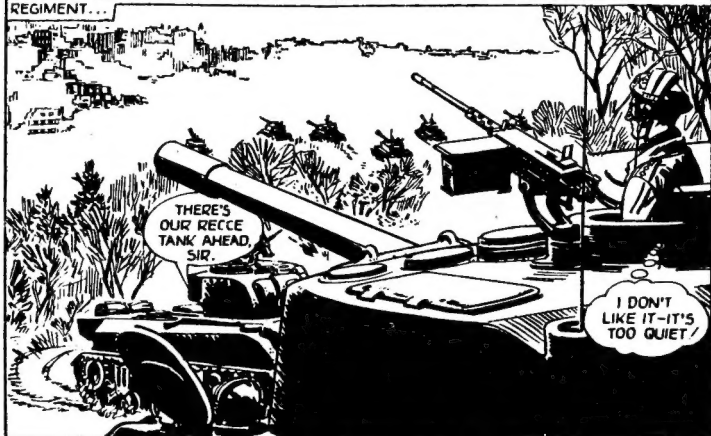


DRIVER - ADVANCE MOVE UP ALONGSIDE 'B' SQUADRON. I WANT TO SEE EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS UP THERE.

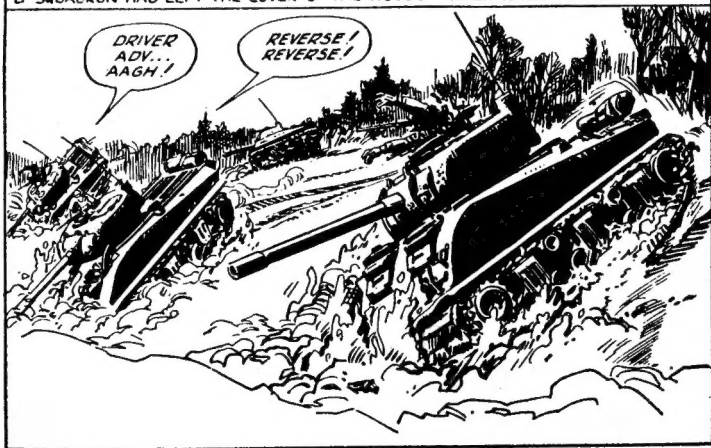


BAKER ONE TO ALL TANKS. FORWARD IN LINE ABREAST - AND KEEP SPREAD OUT!

COLONEL HALSTEAD DID NOT NEED TO TAKE PART IN THAT CAUTIOUS, NERVE-WRACKING ADVANCE. BUT HE WAS A FIGHTER AND THAT WAS THE WAY HE COMMANDED HIS REGIMENT...



'B' SQUADRON HAD LEFT THE COVER OF THE WOODS — WHEN IT HAPPENED !



THE ENEMY TANK TRAP HAD BEEN SKILFULLY PREPARED. THERE WAS NO BACKING OUT OF ITS STEEP SIDES...AND THE MORE THE TRACKS CHURNED, THE DEEPER THE SHERMANS SANK...



FROM THE TOWN, GREY-GREEN FIGURES WERE RACING TOWARDS THE HELPLESS TANKS.



COOLLY, THE GERMANS KNELT AND TOOK AIM...



THEN CAME THE SECOND ENEMY WAVE - THEIR GUNS HAMMERING -



COLONEL HALSTEAD'S EYES WERE LIKE GLAZING COALS OF HATE AGAINST HIS WHITE, SHOCKED FACE...

A WHOLE SQUADRON LOST!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN...



AN OFFICER OF THE CRACK GERMAN PANZER GRENADIERS TURNED WILDLY AS BROWNING BULLETS LASHED ABOUT HIM...

OVER THERE!
MORE OF THE
ENGLANDERS!



THEY
SHALL DIE
ALSO, HERR
LEUTNANT!

LEAD HAMMERING ABOUT HIM, ONE GERMAN GOT CLOSE...

DIE,
ENGLANDER
DOGS!



HIS SHOT PUNCHED THROUGH THE RECCE TANK THAT HAD FIRST USED THE DUD ROUND...

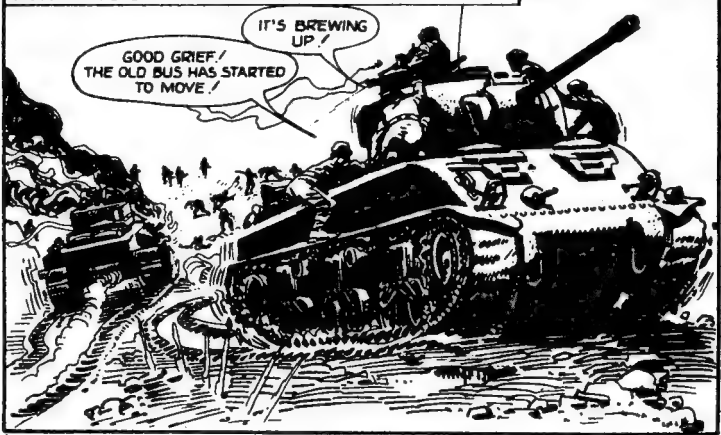
GET ON THE BACK OF MY TANK, YOU MEN. WE'RE MOVING BACK!



CLINGING TO THE PROTECTING TURRET OF COLONEL HALSTEAD'S SHERMAN, THE RECCE TANK'S CREW WERE BORNE SAFELY OUT OF BATTLE...

IT'S BREWING UP!

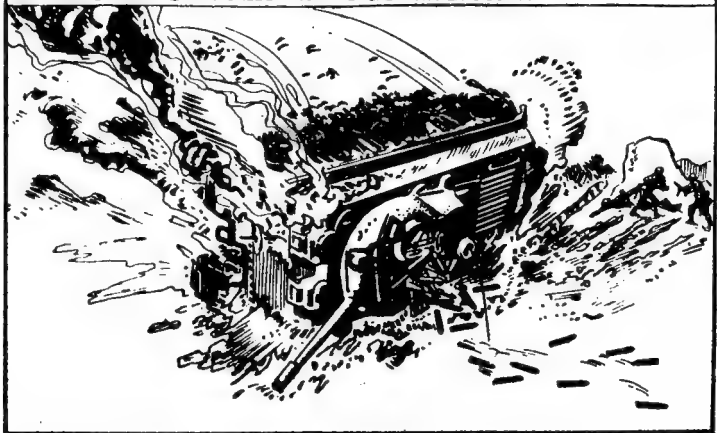
GOOD GRIEF!
THE OLD BUS HAS STARTED
TO MOVE!



ITS BRAKING SYSTEM DESTROYED, THE STRICKEN SHERMAN RUMBLING DOWNHILL ...



ON IT LURCHED, GATHERING SPEED. UNTIL IT TUMBLED OVER AND OVER INTO A HOLLOW, SCATTERING EMPTY SHELL CASES FROM ITS OPEN HATCH DOORS.



MINUTES LATER, STILL TREMBLING WITH GRIEF AND ANGER, COLONEL HALSTEAD REACHED THE REMAINDER OF HIS REGIMENT...

I TAKE IT YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED UP THERE, MAJOR.

YES, SIR. THEIR RADIOS GAVE US THE WHOLE STORY. AT LEAST THE MAJORITY OF THE CREWS FOUND THEIR WAY BACK HERE!

ANOTHER THING, SIR. WE FOUND A SHOT-UP JEEP ABOUT A QUARTER OF A MILE BACK. THERE WAS A WOUNDED OFFICER—AND HE WAS OBVIOUSLY BRINGING THIS DESPATCH TO YOU.

OH— CAN'T BE BATTLE ORDERS OR THEY'D HAVE RELAYED IT OVER THE AIR!



COLONEL HALSTEAD READ THE DESPATCH... THEN GAVE A TIGHT HUMOURLESS SMILE...

YOU CAN CONGRATULATE ME, MAJOR. I'VE BEEN PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL. I'M TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY TO TAKE OVER MY NEW COMMAND. THAT LEAVES YOU IN CHARGE OF THE REGIMENT.

THAT'S WONDERFUL NEWS FOR YOU, SIR. BUT WE SHALL MISS YOU...



THE TANK ACE LIFTED HIS GRIM GAZE TO THE DISTANT GERMAN TOWN OF LIEBERHAUSEN...

IF I'D RECEIVED THIS HALF AN HOUR AGO, I'D BE ON MY WAY TO MY NEW JOB BY NOW. BUT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO 'B' SQUADRON, THAT CAN WAIT. I'VE GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE HERE FIRST.

I UNDERSTAND, SIR. WE ALL OF US FEEL THE SAME WAY.





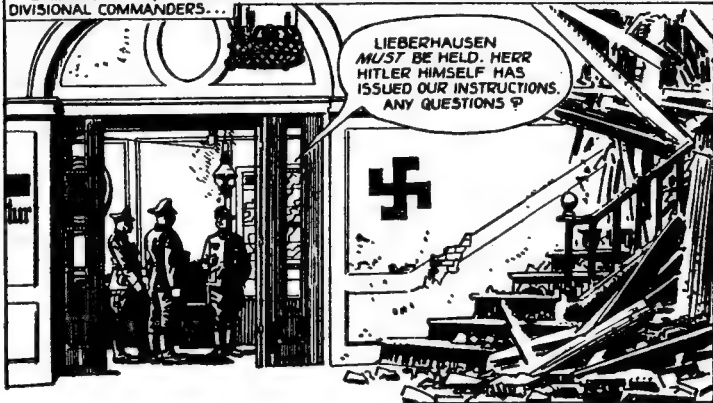
ALREADY THE DUD 75 MM SHELL HAD SHAPED THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE THAT WAS TO COME. HAD IT DESTROYED THE GERMAN HALF-TRACK, THE BRILLIANT FIGHTING BRAIN OF COLONEL HALSTEAD WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST THE GERMANS IN THE TOWN OF LIEBERHAUSEN...



...NOW THE DUD ROUND LAY ON THE BULLET-PITTED GROUND ONE HUNDRED YARDS BELOW THE GERMAN-HELD TOWN. *BUT ITS STORY IS FAR FROM FINISHED...*

Chapter 2. *BATTLE THUNDER*

IN LIEBERHAUSEN, THE GERMAN COMMANDER HELD A HURRIED CONFERENCE WITH HIS DIVISIONAL COMMANDERS...



HAUPTMANN RÖNIG, OF THE FANATICAL PANZER GRENADIERS, STRAIGHTENED WITH FIERCE PRIDE...



SIX TIGER TANKS HAD BEEN SENT TO DEFEND LIEBERHAUSEN... UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE YOUNG, BUT BATTLE-WISE VETERAN, CAPTAIN GERHARD...

ONLY THIS, SIR. WHY MUST WE MAKE A STAND HERE WHEN THERE ARE FAR BETTER DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ONLY SIX MILES AWAY ?

ARE YOU DOUBTING THE WISDOM OF HIGH COMMAND, GERHARD ?



I ONLY REPEAT THAT IT SEEMS A FOOLISH WASTE OF MEN AND ARMOUR TO...

SILENCE, HAUPTMANN GERHARD! YOU FORCE ME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU ARE NOT FIT TO COMMAND MY TANK UNIT!



WHATEVER MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAID NEXT WAS DROWNED BY THE SHATTERING BLAST OF AN EXPLOSION.



HEAD RINGING, GERHARD PEERED THROUGH THE DUST TO WHERE HIS FELLOW OFFICER CROUCHED, STARING AT THE SPRAWLED BODY OF THEIR COMMANDER...

RONIG, COME ON!
GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE
THIS WHOLE PLACE CAVES
IN ON US!

THE COLONEL IS
DEAD. NOW I AM IN
COMMAND!



YOU IN
COMMAND? BY
WHAT RIGHT?

YOU HEARD WHAT WAS SAID.
YOU ARE NOT FIT TO COMMAND EVEN
OUR TANK FORCE. THEREFORE, I AM
THE LOGICAL CHOICE TO
SUCCEED HIM.





AS HE SCRAMBLED INTO THE TURRET, GERHARD DIRECTED TWO OF HIS CREW TO THE SLIDING DOORS OF THE WAREHOUSE...

THE BRITISHERS
ARE AS GOOD AS DEAD!
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!

READY,
CAPTAIN!



AS THE FIRST BRITISH TANK CAME INTO SIGHT, THE TIGER'S DEADLY 88MM GUN FLAMED THROUGH THE NARROW OPENING BETWEEN THE DOORS.

NOW—
CLOSE THE
DOORS!



A SHERMAN TANK SLEWED VIOLENTLY TO A STRICKEN STOP
AS THE MASSIVE SHELL PUNCHED HOME...

WHERE IS
HE? I CAN'T SEE
A TARGET!



AGAIN THE CONCEALING WAREHOUSE DOORS
SLID OPEN. AGAIN THE TIGER ROARED...

BALE OUT!



BUT THE GERMAN HAD UNDERESTIMATED THE SHREWD FIGHTING BRAIN OF HIS ADVERSARY...

IT'S AN OLD TRICK - BUT HE COULD BE IN THAT WAREHOUSE.

GUNNER - TRAVERSE RIGHT BLAST THOSE WAREHOUSE DOORS!

FOR THE FIRST TIME, HAUPTMANN GERHARD HAD COME UP AGAINST AN ENEMY WITH BATTLE EXPERIENCE TO MATCH HIS OWN...

AAAGH!

DRIVER - BACK OUT!

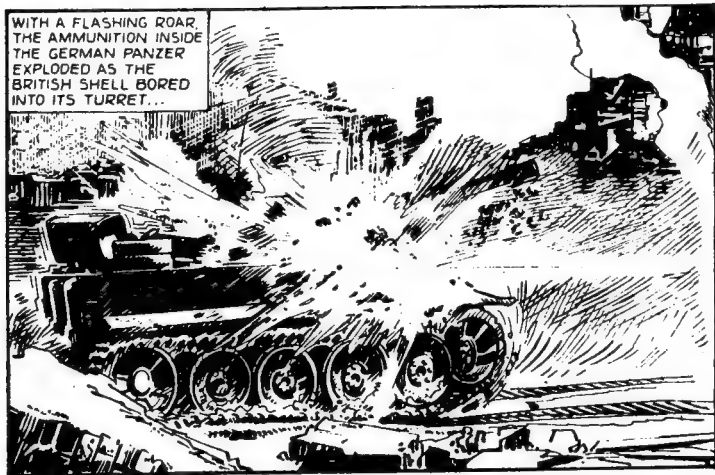


AS HIS TIGER BACKED INTO THE OPEN IT WAS FORCED TO SHOW ITS MORE VULNERABLE SIDES...

OKAY,
GUNNER-HE'S
ALL YOURS!



WITH A FLASHING ROAR,
THE AMMUNITION INSIDE
THE GERMAN PANZER
EXPLODED AS THE
BRITISH SHELL BORED
INTO ITS TURRET...



GERHARD WAS BLOWN CLEAR, BUT HIS TIGER WOULD NEVER AGAIN DESTROY A BRITISH TANK...

I MUST GET TO ANOTHER PANZER. IF THE BRITISH ARE GOING TO KEEP ON ATTACKING THE ROAD, WE CAN STILL STOP THEM!



THE COMMANDER OF ANOTHER TIGER SAW GERHARD...

HERR HAUPTMANN-LOOK!



THEY'VE MOVED INTO POSITION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TOWN, SIR.

THEY ARE TRYING TO STOP US MASSING OUR ARMOUR AT ONE POINT. WHY AREN'T THEY ADVANCING THOUGH?

IT WAS THE SIGHT
OF THE DAMP MIST
SURROUNDING THE
HILL TOWN THAT GAVE
CAPTAIN GERHARD
THE ANSWER...

THE BRITISH
ARE GOING TO TRY
AND HOLD US HERE
UNTIL THE MIST CLEARS-
THEN THEIR ROCKET
PLANES CAN FLY IN
TO FINISH US OFF!



HE FOUND THE GRENADE CAPTAIN AT THE EDGE OF THE TOWN, OVERLOOKING THE BRITISH POSITIONS...

WE'VE GOT TO PULL OUT, RONIG...



THE BRITISHERS WILL HAVE US SURROUNDED IF WE DON'T WITHDRAW NOW. WE ARE UP AGAINST A MAN WHO KNOWS ALL ABOUT TANK WARFARE.



RONIG'S EYES BLAZED...

WE ARE NOT LEAVING, GERHARD! WE HOLD LIEBERHAUSEN - UNTIL THE BRITISH ENTER OVER OUR DEAD BODIES.

THEN YOU WILL FIGHT WITHOUT MY TANKS, RONIG!



WITH A STRANGLING CRY OF WILD RAGE, RONIG JERKED AT HIS PISTOL ...

I TOLD YOU - / AM IN
COMMAND NOW / FOR
COWARDICE AND MUTINY -
/ SENTENCE YOU TO
DEATH !

YOU'RE
CRAZY,
RONIG !

BEFORE THE GRENADIER CAPTAIN'S FINGER COULD
PRESS THE TRIGGER, GERHARD LEAPT AT HIM ...

YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO DESTROY GOOD MEN
CARRYING OUT INSANE
ORDERS FROM BERLIN -
NOT IF I CAN STOP
YOU !

NEXT INSTANT, BOTH GERMANS WERE ROLLING DOWN A SLOPE TO WHERE A SMOULDERING SHERMAN LAY OVERTURNED...



THE YOUNGER OFFICER WAS UP BEFORE HIS ADVERSARY - LUGER POINTING AT RONIG'S HEART...

I SHOULD SHOOT YOU NOW FOR THE MAD DOG YOU ARE, RONIG. INSTEAD, I AM HAVING YOU PLACED UNDER ARREST, WHILE WE RETREAT TO A PROPER DEFENSIVE POSITION.



HIDDEN FROM GERHARD'S EYES BY A CLUMP OF BRUSH, RONIG'S HAND ENCOUNTERED A SMOOTH, HEAVY OBJECT—AN UNEXPLODED BRITISH 75MM. SHELL.

ON YOUR FEET, RONIG. WE'RE GOING BACK!

COWARD!
TRAITOR TO OUR GLORIOUS
FUHRER!



AS GERHARD HALF TURNED, THE HEAVY SHELL SMASHED AGAINST HIS SKULL...

UGH!



SO THE DUD ROUND PLAYED ITS SECOND PART
IN THE BATTLE FOR LIEBERHAUSEN...

THE FUHRER'S
ORDERS SHALL BE
OBEYED TO THE LETTER.
NOW THERE IS NO-ONE
TO PREVENT IT!



BECAUSE OF THAT SAME BRITISH 75MM. SHELL, THE GERMAN FORCE WAS NOW
COMMANDED BY A FANATIC.

CAPTAIN GERHARD... HAS BEEN
KILLED! I AM NOW IN COMMAND!
I WANT ALL AVAILABLE ARMOUR
MASSSED HERE - AT ONCE!

JAWOHL, HERR
HAUPTMANN!



Chapter 3. *LACEY'S CREW*

THEY WERE CALLED "LACEY'S CREW". THE TOUGHEST TANK CREW IN THE REGIMENT. BUT EVEN VETERANS CAN HAVE A BAD DAY...



THE WARNING CAME TOO LATE...

WE'VE LOST
A TRACK! BALE OUT!
BALE OUT!



AS THE FIVE FRIENDS DASHED FOR COVER, A SPANDAUI RATTLED FROM A WINDOW IN LIEBERHAUSEN



WITHOUT A THOUGHT FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY THEY SOMEHOW GOT THE WOUNDED GUNNER TO SAFETY...



YOU'RE SURE GINGER WILL BE ALL RIGHT?



IT WAS A DEJECTED GROUP THAT WATCHED THEIR PAL BEING DRIVEN AWAY TO THE NEARBY FIELD HOSPITAL ...

HE WAS A GOOD GUNNER WAS GINGER. THE BEST!

WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT HIM!



THERE WAS NO DELAY AT ALL IN FINDING A NEW GUNNER ...

THE FITTERS HAVE PATCHED UP ANOTHER SHERMAN FOR YOU BOYS. THIS IS YOUR REPLACEMENT GUNNER - TROOPER EVANS.

WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE ANY TIME, SIR. WE'VE A SCORE TO SETTLE FOR WHAT JERRY DID TO GINGER!



THERE WAS AWED ADMIRATION AND A HINT OF PANIC IN THE EYES OF YOUNG JIMMY EVANS AS HE GAZED AT THE MEN WITH WHOM HE WAS TO GO INTO BATTLE...



The Winning Round

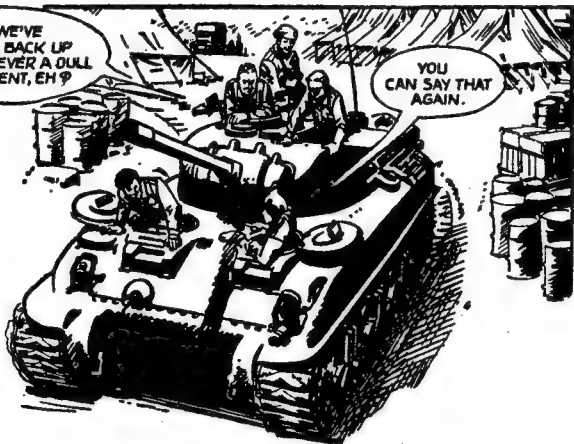
SERGEANT LACEY CLAPPED A FRIENDLY HAND ON JIMMY'S SHOULDER...

THERE'S JUST TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER, JIMMY. WE EACH OF US TRY TO DO OUR JOB BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE REGIMENT. AND, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE NEVER LET EACH OTHER DOWN!



NOW WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK UP THERE. NEVER A DULL MOMENT, EH?

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.



IN THE BESIEGED TOWN OF LIEBERHAUSEN, CAPTAIN RONIG HAD JUST FINISHED BRIEFING THE TIGER COMMANDERS...



WE WILL STRIKE THE BRITISH A HAMMER BLOW FROM WHICH THEY WILL NEVER RECOVER. PREPARE TO ADVANCE!



AS THEY WALKED AWAY, FEAR FLECKED THE EXHAUSTED EYES OF THE TANK COMMANDERS...

DOES THIS CAPTAIN RONIG TAKE THE BRITISH FOR FOOLS!

IF ONLY GERHARD WAS STILL IN COMMAND!



FIVE MINUTES LATER,
ROARING LIKE PRIMEVAL
MONSTERS, THE TIGERS
BEGAN THE DESCENT
FROM LIEBERHAUSEN...



BEHIND THEM SWARMED
THE CRACK GRENADIERS,
TRAINED TO FIGHT WITHOUT
QUESTION...

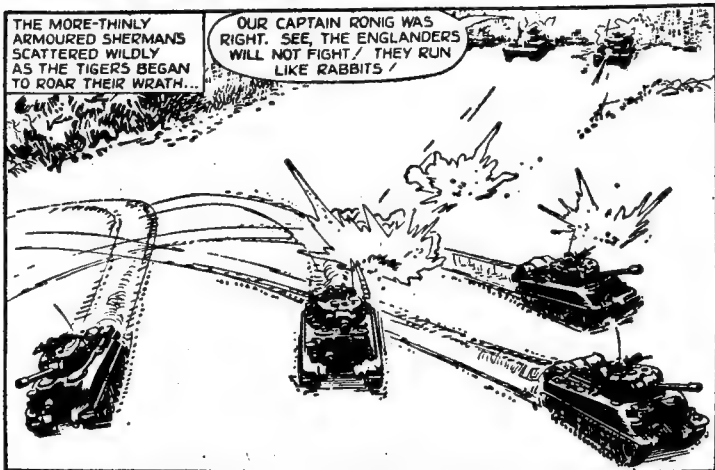


AND BEHIND THE GRENADIERS, CAPTAIN RONIG WATCHED, HIS EYES GLINTING WITH STEELY PRIDE...



THE MORE-THINLY ARMoured SHERMANS SCATTERED WILDLY AS THE TIGERS BEGAN TO ROAR THEIR WRATH...

OUR CAPTAIN RONIG WAS RIGHT. SEE, THE ENGLANDERS WILL NOT FIGHT / THEY RUN LIKE RABBITS /



BUT THE BRITISH TANKS WERE ONLY DOING EXACTLY AS COLONEL HALSTEAD HAD ORDERED...



THEN, SUDDENLY, BETWEEN PANZERS AND GRENADIERS, APPEARED MORE SHERMANS—
DASHING AT FULL SPEED TO CUT THE GERMAN ADVANCE IN TWO.



FRANTICALLY, THE HEAVY TIGERS LUMBERED ABOUT TO ASSIST THEIR INFANTRY... ONLY TO EXPOSE THE WEAKEST PART OF THEIR ARMOUR...



CAPTAIN RONIG'S ARROGANT PLAN OF ATTACK HAD ENDED IN DISASTER FOR THE DEFENDERS OF LIEBERHAUSEN...



IF COLONEL HALSTEAD HAD FOLLOWED UP HIS ADVANTAGE, THE BATTLE FOR LIEBERHAUSEN MIGHT HAVE ENDED THERE AND THEN. BUT 'B' SQUADRON'S MASSACRE WAS STILL FRESH IN HIS MIND.



THERE WERE NOW NO TIGERS LEFT IN LIEBERHAUSEN. BUT THE PANZER GRENADIERS THAT SURVIVED WERE AS FANATICAL IN THEIR HATRED OF THE ALLIES AS THEIR COMMANDER...

ALL IS NOT LOST! FOR THOSE WORTHY TO WEAR THE UNIFORM OF THE THIRD REICH, THERE IS STILL A CHANCE TO PROVE OUR LOYALTY TO THE FÜHRER

WE FIGHT ON! FOR THE FÜHRER!



AN HOUR PASSED...

I'M SURE THEY CAN'T HAVE ANY PANZERS LEFT, SIR. THEY MUST HAVE PULLED OUT!

PERHAPS, BUT I DON'T INTEND TO REPEAT THE TRAGEDY OF 'B' SQUADRON. SEND UP ANOTHER RECCE CREW-- THE BEST WE HAVE!



SERGEANT LACEY GRINNED AS THE COLONEL'S ORDER CAME...

HERE WE GO AGAIN, LADS. WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE, THEY JUST CAN'T DO WITHOUT LACEY'S CREW!



AS HIS SHERMAN LUMBERED INTO MOVEMENT, SERGEANT LACEY SPOKE AGAIN INTO THE INTERCOM...

WE'RE GOING UP TO HAVE A DEKKO AROUND. EVERYTHING OKAY, GUNNER?

YES, SERGEANT. EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT!



FARTHER UP THE HILL, A WOUNDED GRENADEER WATCHED THE SHERMAN APPROACH...

THAT'S IT, ENGLANDERS. MOVE CLOSER. I AM WAITING FOR YOU!



ONLY A FEW SECONDS BEFORE THE DEADLY STICK BOMB LEFT THE GERMAN'S HAND, SERGEANT LACEY SAW THE DANGER...

JIMMY, TRAVERSE LEFT! HIGH EXPLOSIVE! FIRE!



THERE WAS A MOMENT OF INDECISION. THEN INSTEAD OF AN H.E. SHELL, BROWNING BULLETS RAKED AT THE ENEMY...

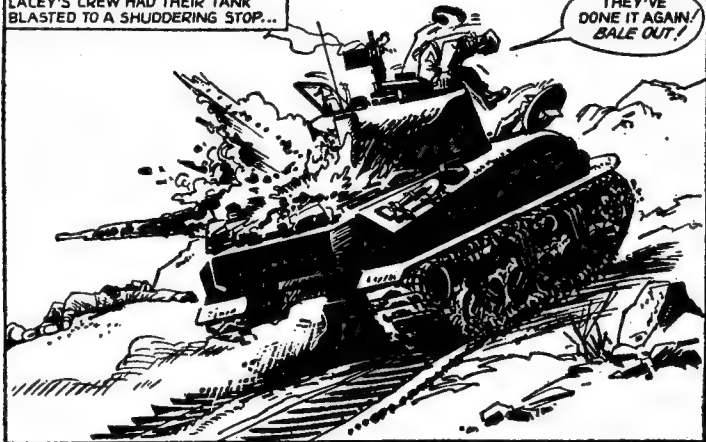
AAAAGH!



BUT ALREADY IT WAS TOO LATE...

FOR THE SECOND TIME THAT DAY, LACEY'S CREW HAD THEIR TANK BLASTED TO A SHUDDERING STOP...

THEY'VE DONE IT AGAIN!
BALE OUT!



THEY DASHED FOR COVER, BUT THIS TIME NO MACHINE GUNS SHRILLED THEIR DEATH SONG.



PHEW!
THAT WAS CLOSE!

JUST OUR BLOOMING LUCK
TO RUN ACROSS
THAT DO-OR-DIE
MERCHANT!

WHY THE HECK
DIDN'T YOU USE AN
H.E. ON THAT JERRY?
THAT WAS THE ONLY
WAY OF MAKING
SURE OF HIM!



I...I COULDN'T,
SERGEANT! I FORGOT
TO RELOAD!

The Winning Round

NEVER HAD
JIMMY EVANS
FELT SO
MISERABLE...

WELL, OF ALL THE DUMB
TRICKS. YOU'LL HAVE TO DO
BETTER THAN THAT IN LACEY'S
CREW, MATE.

I...I'M SORRY.
IT WAS...GOING INTO
ACTION FOR THE
FIRST TIME.

HEY!
TAKE A LOOK
UP HERE!



UNAWARE THAT THE SHERMAN CREW HAD SURVIVED, CAPTAIN RONIG AND HIS
GRENADIERS WAITED BEHIND COVER...

LOOK HOW THEY'RE
ARMED, SARGE. PANZERFAUSTS,
STICK BOMBS—THE LOT! THEY'RE
WAITING TO BLOW OUR BOYS
SKY-HIGH!



THE IMMEDIATE REACTION OF THE BIG SERGEANT WAS TO LEAP TO HIS FEET AND START RUNNING...

YOU BIRDS STAY HERE.
WITH LUCK I CAN REACH
OUR LADS AND
WARN THEM!

NO, SARGE!
THEY'LL SEE
YOU!

SERGEANT LACEY'S LONG LEGS
CLEARED ONLY A FEW YARDS...

AAAAGH!

THEY GOT
THE SERGEANT.
I'M GOING OUT
AFTER HIM!



AT THAT MOMENT, FROM THE FOOT OF THE HILL CAME THE ROAR OF TANK ENGINES...

HOLD IT, RON—THE SARGE IS PULLING HIMSELF INTO COVER. HE'S STILL ALIVE!

HEY, LISTEN, YOU TWO—THE REGIMENT'S ON THE MOVE!

BELIEVING IT WAS ALL CLEAR, COLONEL HALSTEAD WAS LEADING HIS TANKS UP TO THE TOWN...

WE HEARD THAT ONE PANZERFAUST, THEN NOTHING MORE. THE MAIN GERMAN FORCE MUST HAVE PULLED OUT!

I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR!



BETWEEN THE ADVANCING REGIMENT AND THE WAITING GRENADIERS, LACEY'S CREW LISTENED WITH MOUNTING HORROR...

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. THERE'S ENOUGH GERMANS BEHIND THAT TRAP TO KNOCK OUT EVERY ONE OF OUR TANKS.

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO, RON!



YOUNG JIMMY EVANS LIFTED MISERY-FILLED EYES TO WHERE THEIR OWN KNOCKED-OUT SHERMAN STOOD...



JUST ONE ROUND - IF ONLY THERE WAS ONE ROUND IN THE TANK - THAT'S ALL I'LL NEED!

IT WAS THEN THAT HE SAW IT - AN UNFIRED H.E. ROUND LYING NEAR A DEAD GERMAN...

BY GOLLY - THAT'S A BRITISH SEVENTY-FIVE SHELL AND IT'S STILL LIVE!



The Winning Round

JUST AS SERGEANT LACEY HAD DONE, THE YOUNG REPLACEMENT GUNNER DASHED FROM COVER ...



AGAIN, CAME THE SHRILL SCREAM OF A SPANDAU, BUT LUCK STAYED WITH JIMMY EVANS.

THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE TO MAKE AMENDS—
I MUST SUCCEED!

ANOTHER
ENGLANDER!
SHOOT HIM
DOWN!



HEEDLESS OF THE DANGER JIMMY
SCRAMBLED DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS OF
THE WRECKED SHERMAN...

WHAT'S HE THINK
HE CAN DO WITH ONE
SHELL?

THAT SHERMAN'S
GOING TO
BREW UP ANY
SECOND!



ALMOST FAINTING WITH THE HEAT, JIMMY
RAMMED THE SHELL INTO THE BREACH...

IF I CAN ONLY GET
SOME OF THOSE GERMANS,
I MIGHT SAVE A FEW OF
OUR CREWS!



AS THE GUN TURRET OF THE STRICKEN
SHERMAN BEGAN TO TRAVERSE...



HIMMEL!
THE MAD ENGLAND
IS GOING TO OPEN FIRE
ON US!

CAPTAIN RONG SHOUTED FRANTICALLY AS HE SAW TERRIFIED GRENADIERS LIFT THEIR PANZERFAUSTS...



BUT IN THEIR TERROR THEY HARDLY HEARD THEIR COMMANDER...AND FOUR PANZER-FAUSTS CRASHED IN THUNDEROUS UNISON.



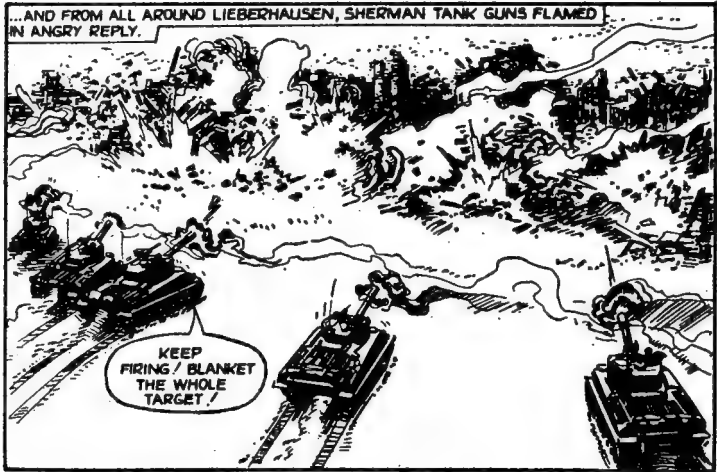
EVEN ABOVE THE ROAR OF TANK ENGINES, COLONEL HALSTEAD HEARD THE PANZERFAUST BARRAGE ...

LION ONE TO ALL
TANKS. THE GERMANS
ARE STILL UP THERE / BLOW
THEM TO BLAZES /



...AND FROM ALL AROUND LIEBERHAUSEN, SHERMAN TANK GUNS FLAMED IN ANGRY REPLY.

KEEP
FIRING / BLANKET
THE WHOLE
TARGET /



The Winning Round

IN THAT HAVOC-RIDDEN BARRAGE, CAPTAIN RONG'S DREAMS OF GLORY
DIED ...



EVEN BEFORE THE POUNDING BARRAGE CEASED, LACEY'S CREW WERE RUNNING
FOR THE SHATTERED SHERMAN.



WITH THE STEEL HULK OF THE BURNING SHERMAN HOT BENEATH THEIR FEET, THEY REACHED INSIDE THE SMOKING TURRET...



THEY PULLED THE YOUNG GUNNER TO SAFETY AND LAID HIM GENTLY DOWN...



MINUTES LATER, THEY WATCHED JIMMY LOADED ONTO A JEEP...



THE FEELING IN LACEY'S VOICE BROUGHT A SURGE OF PRIDE TO THE YOUNG GUNNER...

THEY'LL HAVE TO GET US A SIX-MAN TANK. FOR EVEN WHEN ME AND GINGER GET BACK, LACEY'S CREW WON'T BE COMPLETE WITHOUT YOU!



SO THE BATTLE OF LIEBERHAUSEN ENDED—AND ONLY NOW, WAS COLONEL HALSTEAD READY TO HAND OVER HIS REGIMENT.

IT'S YOUR OUTFIT NOW, CAPTAIN. LOOK AFTER IT—YOU'VE SOME FINE MEN UNDER YOUR COMMAND!



THEN THE MAN WHO WAS NOW TO BECOME A GENERAL, TOOK A LONG LOOK AT THE MIST-SHROUDED, SHELL-RACKED BATTLEGROUND...

WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES A BATTLE GO ONE WAY...OR ANOTHER? IT'S A MATTER OF LUCK, I SUPPOSE.



BUT THE ANSWER TO THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE FOR LIEBERHAUSEN WAS ONLY A FEW FEET AWAY - IN THE GUN BARREL OF A BURNING SHERMAN...



...THE ANSWER WAS A 75MM TANK SHELL THAT DID NOT EXPLODE - A DUD ROUND!

FIRE ALL GUNS

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MACANDREWS WAS THE MASTER OF HIS TINY DOMAIN, THE ENGINE ROOM OF MTB 314 - A WORLD OF GLEAMING MACHINERY AND CONTROLLED POWER.

WATCH THAT OIL PRESSURE, JENKINS! KEEP Y'WITS ABOUT YOU, MAN!

'IM AND 'IS PERISHIN' ENGINES! OLD MAC'D TAKE 'EM ON LEAVE WITH 'IM IF 'E COULD GET 'EM IN 'IS KITBAG!

ONLY ONE OF THE TRIPLE BANKED ENGINES WAS WORKING, FOR THE MTB WAS MAKING A SILENT APPROACH TOWARDS A SUSPECTED ENEMY CONVOY.

UNIDENTIFIED SHIPS STARBOARD QUARTER, SIR. AT LEAST ONE A WARSHIP - DESTROYER, I THINK...

THE NIGHT GLASSES HELPED LIEUTENANT PALMER IDENTIFY THE DARK SHAPES...

CARGO VESSEL - EIGHT THOUSAND TONS. A COUPLE OF SMALLER COASTERS - A DESTROYER - VON HEFFNER CLASS...

MAC - WE'RE GOING
IN TO ATTACK A JERRY
CONVOY. ARE THOSE CLOCKWORK
MOTORS OF YOURS READY TO
GIVE US FULL POWER ?



HAVE MY
ENGINES EVER LET
YOU DOWN BEFORE,
SKIPPER ? OF COURSE
WE'RE READY !



LIEUTENANT PALMER GRINNED AT HIS
ENGINEER'S HEATED PROTEST . . .

GOOD
OLD MAC !

DESTROYER
SIGNALLING, SIR.
THE MORSE LETTER 'K'
- SEEMS LIKE A
CHALLENGE . . .



THE MTB WAS STILL 4000 YARDS FROM THE
ENEMY CARGO SHIP - TOO FAR FOR A GOOD
TORPEDO STRIKE . . .

SIGNAL 'K'
BACK. IT WON'T BE
THE CORRECT ANSWER
TO THE CHALLENGE,
BUT IT MIGHT KEEP
THEM GUESSING FOR A
MINUTE OR TWO . . .



EVERY SECOND TOOK THEM CLOSER. BUT IT COULD NOT LAST ...

HA - THEIR
PATIENCE IS
EXHAUSTED !

START ALL
ENGINES ! FULL
SPEED, MAC !

HER SPEED BUILDING UP TO 35 - 40 - 45 KNOTS,
MTB 314 RACED TOWARDS THE ENEMY CONVOY.

THEY'RE
GETTING MIGHTY
CLOSE, SIR !

READY,
BOTH
TUBES !

AS THE 21 INCH TORPEDOES
LEAPED FROM THEIR TUBES,
THE GERMAN DESTROYER
SCORED ITS FIRST HIT ...

AAAAGH !

THE MTB SHUDDERED, BUT STILL ANSWERED THE HELM . . .

HARD
A'PORT ! FIRE
ALL GUNS !

OERLIKON AND MACHINE GUNS JOINED IN A FRENZIED CHORUS OF DEFIANCE AS THE TORPEDO BOAT TOOK EVASIVE ACTION. AND THEN HER TORPEDO STRUCK HOME.

WE'VE
HIT THE
BLIGHTER !

BUT RETRIBUTION WAS CATCHING UP WITH THE DARING ATTACKER . . .

DONNERWETTER ! THE SWINE HAS HIT THE BIG ONE ! BLAST THE IMPUDENT DOG OUT OF THE WATER, GUNNERY OFFICER, OR IT WILL BE THE WORSE FOR YOU AND YOUR MEN !

THE GERMAN DESTROYER'S GUNS
ROARED THEIR ANGER — AND
MTB 314 WAS HIT AGAIN . . .



THE SHELL PIERCED THE THIN HULL AND
EXPLODED IN THE ENGINE ROOM . . .



THERE WAS A TERRIBLE CLANGING NOISE AS PISTONS, AND RODS AND GEARS WERE MANGLED INTO UTTER
RUIN. MAC GAVE A HEART-RENDING CRY . . .



THE TORPEDO BOAT, ALL POWER GONE, PLOUGHED TO A HALT ...

NOW WE'RE
FOR IT ! THE
BLIGHTER'S GOING
TO RAM US !



AT THAT MOMENT, A WILD-EYED IRISHMAN CHARGED UP OUT OF THE WRECKAGE OF HIS ENGINE ROOM, C.P.O. MACANDREWS' HOT, CELTIC BLOOD WAS UP !

THE SCUTTLE-HEADED
VANDALS ! WHERE'RE THE
ANIMALS THAT WRECKED
MY ENGINES ?



THE "ENGINE-WRECKERS" WERE BEARING DOWN ON THE HELPLESS MTB AT THIRTY KNOTS ...

I'LL KILL YE,
Y'SAUSAGE-EATING
HEATHEN !

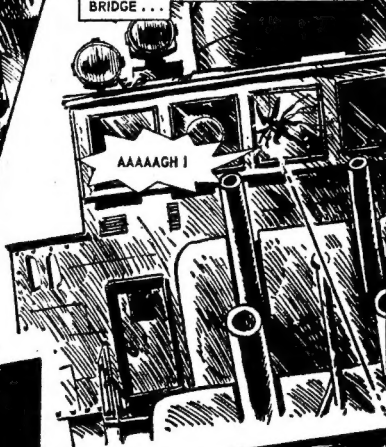
THE CHIEF'S
GONE BONKERS !
WHAT CAN HE HOPE
TO DO WITH THAT
OLD POP-GUN
OF HIS ?



THE ANCIENT RIFLE BANGED AWAY FURIOUSLY ...



OUT OF THE THREE SHOTS HE GOT OFF, TWO SPLATTERED AGAINST THE ENEMY'S STEEL HULL - AND THE THIRD PIERCED THE GLASS SCREEN OF THE DESTROYER'S BRIDGE ...



IT WAS A SHOT IN
A MILLION - A
COMPLETE FLUKE !

DONNERWETTER !
HERR KAPITAN - YOU
ARE WOUNDED !

THE WHEEL,
YOU FOOL - GET
BACK TO THE
WHEEL !



BUT FOR A FEW VITAL SECONDS, THE DESTROYER HAD YEERED FROM ITS COLLISION COURSE. THE CRIPPLED MTB WAS SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION . . .

PHEW! THAT WAS A CLOSE SHAVE!



LIEUTENANT PALMER WENT DOWN TO WHERE MAC WAS STILL SHAKING HIS FIST AFTER THE VANISHING DESTROYER . . .

CALM DOWN, MAC!
YOU COULDN'T STOP
A DESTROYER WITH THAT
OLD MUSKET. NOW,
GET BACK TO THOSE ENGINES
OF YOURS - AND SEE IF YOU
CAN SCRAPE UP ENOUGH
POWER TO GET US HOME!

IF I COULD
ONLY HAVE PUT A
BULLET IN THE
BRUTE . . .!



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GENERAL SLAPS SOLDIER

On 11 th July 1943 Lieut-General George S. Patton, the commander of the American Seventh Army, began his personal crusade into Europe by landing on a beach in Sicily. Patton was known as old Blood and Guts —and to the cynics among his soldiers, this meant 'his guts, our blood'. He was a flamboyant, impulsive character, and in Sicily his Seventh Army had been given the task of protecting the flank of Montgomery's Eighth Army which was to make the main attack.

Patton was furious at his relegation to a secondary role. But Patton came up against the same fierce German resistance as the Eighth Army, and he became very exasperated with his senior officers.

In this mood he visited a hospital and began interviewing the patients. He asked each of them where they have been wounded, praised their courage, and wished them a speedy recovery. Finally he came to a soldier who was sitting hunched up, shaking and shivering. Patton asked him what had happened. The soldier sobbed 'It's my nerves. I can't take the shelling any more'. The General exploded 'Your nerves! Hell, you're just a coward, you yellow son of a bitch!' He then slapped the man and shouted 'Shut up that Goddam crying. I won't have these brave men here who have been shot seeing a yellow bastard sitting there crying'. Again he slapped the man and turning to the officer in charge of the hospital ordered 'Don't you admit this yellow bastard, there's nothing the matter with him'.

Turning to the soldier again he said 'You're going back to the front line and you may get shot and killed, but you're going to fight. If you don't I'll stand you up against the wall in front of a firing squad!' Reaching for his pistol he said 'I ought to shoot you myself, you goddamned whimpering coward'.

The doctors were outraged by Patton's behaviour, and though an attempt was made to suppress it the news eventually reached General Eisenhower who was Patton's superior officer. Eisenhower was delighted with the performance of the Seventh Army, and believed that Patton was one of the best American general., but he could not ignore this deplorable act. He ordered Patton to apologise to the soliders, the hospital staff and a divisional parade. In the U.S.A. when the news broke there was demands that he be sacked from the Army. But Eisenhower fought hard for Patton on the ground that he was needed for the invasion of France, and he was vindicated in the dashing success of Patton's U.S. Third Army in the summer of 1944.